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ABSTRACT

The purpose of the conference, "Wagging the Dog, Carting the Horse: Testing vs. Improving California Schools," was to discuss alternative perspectives on testing and evaluation in education and their role in improving teaching and learning. Four papers were presented: (1) "Using Educational Evaluation for the Improvement of California Schools," by Elliot Eisner; (2) "Evaluating Educational Quality: A Rational Design," by Eva L. Baker; (3) "The Influence of Testing on Teaching and Learning," by Norman Frederiksen; and (4) "Beyond Outcome Measures: An Agenda for School Improvement," by John Goodlad. These papers, and the small group discussions at the conference, are summarized in this paper. The conference participants are listed, and the conference program is appended. (BW)

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RESEARCH INTO PRACTICE PROJECT

Summary of Conference Proceedings
"Wagging the Dog, Carting the Horse:
Testing and Improving Schools"

Joan Herman
Project Director

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Center for the Study of Evaluation
UCLA Graduate School of Education

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Introduction

This document summarizes proceedings of "Wagging the Dog, Carting the Horse: Testing vs. Improving California Schools," a conference sponsored jointly by the UCLA Center for the Study of Evaluation and the UCLA Laboratory in School and Community Education. The one day conference was held on June 7, 1984 at the Sheraton Miramar Hotel in Santa Monica, California.

The purpose of the conference was to discuss alternative perspectives on testing and evaluation in education and their role in improving teaching and learning. The conference considered whether, in the current rush to issue "report cards" on our schools, there may be danger that we are losing sight of what is meant by a "quality education." More particularly, speakers posed -- and provided alternative answers to -- the questions of what should be assessed and how evaluation can best contribute to our understanding of schools and to their improvement.

The conference attracted a diverse audience of professional educators, school board members, educational researchers and policy-makers. It featured presentations by Professor Eva Baker, Directors of the UCLA Center for the Study of Evaluation; Professor Elliot Eisner, Stanford University; Dr. Norman Frederickson, Educational Testing Service; and Professor John I. Goodlad, former Dean of the UCLA Graduate School of Education. Presentations were followed by questions and answers and small group discussions. (A copy of the program is provided in the appendix.) A summary of the presentations and small group discussions is provided in the following pages, followed by a listing of conference participants. The

full text from the presentations can be found in "1984 Policy Studies: The use of testing and evaluation for assessing educational quality and improving school practice."

Using Educational Evaluation for the Improvement
of California's Schools
Elliot Eisner

Measurement, evaluation, and testing should be viewed as three independent processes. Measurement is an arbitrary means of quantifying and describing something without making value judgments about its quality. Evaluation involves making value judgments about something on the basis of some relevant criteria. Testing is a way of getting information by eliciting a response to something.

However, while we can measure without evaluating, can evaluate without measuring and testing, and can test without measuring, the three are often confounded. For example, when newspaper headlines signal decline in test scores, these interpreted test scores, though they provide no information about school context and practice, have an effect on the setting of educational priorities and the educational climate of schools. One has only to spend time in a classroom to see the effect of tests and test scores on teachers' practice.

What we need to do, instead of over-reliance on test scores, is to conduct evaluations that examine classrooms in the context of schooling, evaluations which would thus have the potential to improve the quality of schooling. What we need to do is to subject educational planning, curriculum development, and instructional content and strategies to evaluation, and in order to make effective uses of evaluation, we need to focus on the classroom unit.

Unfortunately, we have created a situation that makes it difficult for evaluators to spend time in classrooms and equally difficult for teachers

to get feedback on how well they are running their classes. We have created a situation in which it is sometimes impossible for teachers to discover ways to become better at their jobs. Over-reliance on tests as "evaluative" information has contributed to this problem.

To help overcome this situation, we need to begin stressing evaluation's educational role, to use evaluation to inform teachers about significant educational practice. To be able to do this, we must provide teachers with access to each other and to establish a climate of trust so that teachers will be willing to accept the observations of their colleagues. Such observation should be designed to describe the subtle but significant events that take place in a school and to provide feedback to teachers that they can use to modify their classroom practice. Of necessity, this description must move beyond the purely quantitative information provided in test scores.

A prime ingredient in the process outlined above is to reconceive our notions of inservice. We need to view inservice as a means of stressing professionalism, as a vehicle which offers teachers the critical support of their colleagues, as a way of stimulating teachers to become connoisseurs of educational practice. Such a climate will do much more to improve education than current attempts to humiliate teachers into excellence by publishing their students' test scores.

Instead of trying to bully schools into quality education, we need to give teachers a stake in what they teach, we need to have diverse programs which use multiple criteria, and we need to create a climate which fosters and encourages teachers' professional growth.

Evaluating Educational Quality: A Rational Design

Eva L. Baker

Evaluation reflects the viewpoint that we can influence the course of educational events by planning, implementing, and assessing. However, evaluation does not work this way very often.

Though many models of evaluation have been proposed -- criterion-referenced, norm-referenced, goal-oriented, responsive, and so forth -- the one that we need -- effective -- has eluded us for a variety of reasons.

For evaluation to be used it must be usable, meaning that it should reach people who can act on it, it should reach them in a timely manner, and it should be valid and credible. Above all, to be used for school improvement, evaluation must be aimed at the principal unit of change -- the school.

Most evaluations, unfortunately, are driven by a different reality. They are mandated from above, usually to meet the legitimate questions of school boards and government agencies about the effectiveness of education. These questions deal with educational processes such as quality of services as well as questions about what and how well students learn.

But while evaluation needs to generate information that will contribute to responsible oversight of the educational system, it needs also to provide information useful at the point of change, the local school. And therein lies the dilemma: the mismatch between top-down, externally mandated evaluation requirement and bottom-up, locally responsive efforts.

A system for accountability and oversight is driven from the top down and demands comparability of assessment in areas requiring policy

decisions. Point of change evaluation is driven from the bottom up and emphasizes the uniqueness of each school and its staff, setting, students, and social context.

Top-down evaluations usually rely upon commercial achievement tests to generate the information they need for comparison purposes. Bottom-up evaluations require more finely-grained information about student performance. While the two systems make overlapping demands, they also differ tremendously. Those within the schools often find little use in the information provided solely for top-down, policy needs. It is possible, however, to reconcile and merge the two viewpoints efficiently so that policy needs are met while maintaining the personality, integrity, and idiosyncrasy of individual schools.

Such a system, embracing both top-down and bottom-up needs, would allow for cross-student and school comparison. However, it would also allow for local option, quick turn-around outcomes measured across time, with possible multiple data sources. It would also address quality of school life, quality of effort, instructional resources, and include measures of process/outcome, affect, and overall context. It would provide a comprehensive evaluation system that could help direct a school improvement agenda.

The Influence of Testing on Teaching and Learning

Norman Frederiksen

There is little question that tests influence what is taught and what is learned. Students, for example, adopt different study methods for different test formats. If a multiple choice test is expected, they will try to learn factual material. If an essay test is expected, they will be more inclined to look for broader concepts and their relationships.

This kind of test influence would not be bothersome if students were exposed to a variety of test formats. But it seems that the numbers of multiple choice tests given to students each year has grown enormously. For example, because it is easier to write multiple choice items that measure factual knowledge, item writers tend not to write items measuring skills in analysis, problem solving, and application. Further, due to increased pressure to teach minimum competency skills, there is less effort to teach important skills that are difficult to measure with multiple choice tests.

Certain trends seem to be emerging from these practices. There is research showing that while performance on test items measuring the basic skills has not declined, performance on items tapping the more complex cognitive skills has. It seems clear that we need tests, then, which measure not only the basic skills but also the ability to process information rapidly and accurately, to apply principles in new situations, and to solve problems not previously encountered.

There are various alternatives to multiple tests. The essay test is one such possibility. And although essay tests are sometimes criticized for their scoring time and low reliability, a variety of procedures exist

both for decreasing the time required for scoring and for increasing rater reliability.

Other testing alternatives, many of which are quite different from conventional tests, have grown out of theories of cognition. One such idea is concerned with measuring speed in performing cognitive tasks. Further, it is possible to combine both speed and power (the more conventional approach) in a test.

Similarly, it is possible to devise tests which tap both short- and long-term memory, and there are various approaches to assessing the processes a student brings to bear in representing a given problem. Different scoring procedures exist for each of these alternatives.

An important feature of the alternatives outlined above is that they represent tasks as well as constituting tests. Greater consideration needs to be given to task assignments such as writing papers, solving assignments, and taking tests. If we begin to view tests as tasks, we will be helping students to acquire not only the knowledge base but also the information-processing skills that are necessary to developing high levels of proficiency in thinking.

Beyond Outcome Measures:
 An Agenda for School Improvement
 John Goodlad

The current furor over school reform needs to be placed in perspective. The decline in competence in schooling and the increasing disaffection in schooling that occurred in the 1970s is closely linked to declining faith in our institutions in general and to economic downturns in the same period.

Publication of A Nation at Risk led to a galvanic connection of achievement test scores with school health. That is just as mediocrity in the schools was seen as reflected in declining achievement scores, so was improved school health to be seen in increased achievement scores. But if the schools are in the poor condition that many suggest, it is going to take a long period of care to bring them back to a condition of health. Further, achievement test scores will continue to be a poor indicator for judging that health.

How do we arrive at a more accurate diagnosis of the health of schooling, one that we can then use to prescribe a remedy? First, we need to view the healthy school as one which assures comprehensive democratic access to the domains of knowledge that constitute a good general education. Second, we need an overall evaluative system commensurate with these expectations. That system, essentially, will place much greater emphasis on the context of schooling, on the conditions of schooling which promote or impede healthy growth. We need to examine, for example, satisfaction, school climate, classroom climate, principal-teacher relationships, school-community climate, and the like. Features such as these are not tapped by achievement tests.

Having assessed critical features of the schools environment, we can then bring to bear the value system of the professionals in the school to set an agenda for improvement. And instructional assessment plays an important role in monitoring progress in the agenda for improvement.

However, such assessment will bear little resemblance to the typical achievement test. Rather, it will be concerned with the provision and assessment of an array of learning experiences commensurate with our expectations of a healthy school. Such an assessment system would engage children in solving real problems. It might have children working on problems for which there is no reward. It would engage in modes of inquiry commensurate with what we think real learning is. It would provide them with good guidance and feedback.

This kind of evaluation system will allow us to take the longitudinal view required to gradually bring our schools back to health.

Summary of Small Group Discussions

The conference provided participants with the opportunity to come together in small groups to discuss the implications of the conference for testing policies and school renewal. Small groups were constituted to enable interaction between researchers, practitioners and policy makers.

The conclusions of the small group discussions were as follows:

Group 1:

1. There is a fundamental conflict between the ideal and the real. We know that standardized test scores are not adequate or valid indicators of schools, but given the political realities, we must pursue them.
2. We need to build better coalitions to influence the political process. We need to organize researchers and practitioners so that they can influence program mandates and help enact programs which actually facilitate real change and renewal.
3. We need to find better ways to communicate our progress to our school constituencies. We need to educate them about the limits of standardized tests and share with them a broader and more comprehensive picture of school progress.

Group 2:

1. We need to assume the challenge of reeducating our staffs, community, and districts to issues of renewal. We need to provide time for dialogue between and among units to set goals and plan solution strategies.
2. We need to concentrate on developing professional leadership that can refocus and broaden educational reform. We need to build trust, support risk-taking and experimentation, provide incentives and rewards, and harness the time and resources needed for renewal.
3. We need to develop alternative assessment measures to help us analyze and improve our progress. We need measures that are sensitive to what teachers are trying to accomplish, that can serve as formative checkpoints, and that tap higher level critical thinking and problem-solving skills.

Group 3:

1. We need a strong, confident offensive for change. Rather than being defensive, we need to be proactive in setting the agenda for schools.
2. We need to provide quality time to promote dialogue among teachers, principals, districts and their communities to assess their needs and goals and to plan for improvement. We particularly need to bring teachers back into the dialogue.
3. We need a strong, professional teaching staff in order to promote renewal, we need to find the time, resources and incentives to "reprofessionalize" them and to facilitate their continued growth and satisfaction.

Group 4:

1. We need to face the realities of current testing practices. We must do well to satisfy our public.
2. We need to develop a variety of ways to assess school programs. We need measures of higher level thinking skills, attitudes, and other indicators of school climate and process.
3. We need to reeducate the public, and the media in particular as to what are accomplishing.

Conference Participants

WAGGING THE DOG, CARTING THE HORSE:
TESTING VS. IMPROVING CALIFORNIA SCHOOLS

June 7, 1984

NAME

DISTRICT

Delores Allen	Moorpark USD
Christine Amato	Vallecito School District
Eleanor Anderson	Orange County
Carol Anglan	Santa Clara USD
John Avila	Ceres USD
Jim Bailey	L.A. County
Eva Baker	UCLA
Pam Bailis	UCLA
Adrianne Bank	UCLA
Carolyn Banks	Fillmore USD
Amy Baumann	Hacienda-La Puente USD
John Bay	Ventura USD
Marge Beckman	Norwalk-La Mirada USD
Iris Berke	Santa Clara County
Roque Berlanga	ABC USD
Judy Beuerman	Merced City Schools
Tom Bishop	L.A. County
James Black	Burlingame School District
Ruth Bloom	L.A. County
Lane Bove	Loyola Marymount
Delbert Bredy	Rialto USD
David Brown	Walnut Valley USD
Douglas Brown	L.A. County
Warren Bryld	Redlands USD
James Burry	UCLA
Leigh Burstein	UCLA
Margaret Butt	Lamont
Maggie Carrillo	Anaheim Union H.S. District
James Catterall	UCLA
Norman Chaffin	Elsinore Union H.S. District
Jean Cohen	League of Women's Voters
Dean Conklin	Charter Oak USD
Margaret Connel	Santa Barbara City School Dist.
Betty Coogan	Norwalk-LaMirada USD
Jim Cox	Anaheim Union H.S. Dist.
Linda Daniels	Del Mar Union
William Davis	Grossmont Union H.S. Dist.
Greg Demuth	Tulare USD
Jan Dennis-Rounds	Cerritos College
Bill DeSimone	Merced City Schools
Susan Dollar	Fillmore USD
Martha Dong	Bassett USD
Elliot Eisner	Stanford University
Donald Empey	Glendale USD
Nancy Enell	Sacramento City Schools
Sydney Farivar	UCLA

Attendees - 6/7/84 Conference

Jane Fauero
 Gerald Figgins
 Tom Fitzgerald
 Norman Frederiksen
 Helen Fried
 Pat Ganther
 Jane Gawronski
 Blossom Getty
 Larry Gilham
 Bruce Givner
 Claude Goldenberg
 Stephen Goldstone
 John Goodlad
 Marsha Graham
 Stu Greenfield
 Julie Hadden
 Michael Halloran
 Lee Hancock
 Keith Hartwig
 Bruce Hauger
 Paul Heckman
 Claire Hobbs
 Patricia Horkan
 Ginger House
 Leonard Hughart
 Kathleen Hulburd
 Emma Hulett
 Stephen Isaac
 Tom Jacobson
 Vera Jashni
 Nancy Jenkins
 Bob Jones
 Michael Karpman
 Robert King
 Gerry Klor
 Charles Kondrit
 Al Koshiyama
 Jaci Kriege
 Carol Kurtz
 David Kuzmich
 Alex Law
 Delores Lena
 Kent Lewis
 Tod Likins
 Gary Luke
 Peggy Lyons
 Rudy Macioge
 Dorothy Maloney
 Tom Martin
 John Martoise
 Leo Martucci
 Jack McLaughlin

Glendora USD
 Redlands USD
 Charter Oak USD
 Ed. Testing Service
 ABC USD
 UCLA
 Walnut Valley USD
 Novato USD
 Exter Public Schools
 Irvine USD
 UCLA
 Albany USD
 UCLA
 ABC USD
 State Dept. of Ed.
 L.A. City Schools
 San Ramon Valley USD
 L.A. City College
 Private Consultant
 Anaheim Union H.S. Dist.
 UCLA
 Freemont Union H.S. Dist.
 Del Mar Union
 Norwalk-LaMirada USD
 Tulare City School Dist.
 Freemont Union H.S. Dist.
 Norwalk-LaMirada USD
 San Diego City Schools
 Grossmont Union H.S. Dist.
 Culver City USD
 Norwalk-LaMirada USD
 Norwalk-LaMirada USD
 Redlands USE
 Grossmont Union H.S. Dist.
 Petaluma School Dist.
 Rialto USD
 State Dept. of Education
 Grossmont Union H.S. Dist.
 Tom Hayden's Office
 Anaheim Union H.S. Dist.
 State Dept. of Education
 ABC USD
 UCLA
 Los Gatos Joint Union H.S. Dist.
 Napa Valley USD
 Santa Monica/Malibu USD
 Fontana Unified
 Conejo Valley USD
 ABC USD
 L.A. County
 Santa Monica/Malibu USD
 Sunnyvale

Attendees - 6/7/84 Conference

Judith Miller
 Shirley Mills
 Thelma Moore
 T. C. Moshier
 Bobbi Mulholland
 Millie Murray
 Gerald Nagata
 Dan Nasman
 Bruce Newlin
 Warren Newman
 Frank Nicassio
 Wilhelmine Nielsen
 Jeannie Oakes
 Phillip Oakes
 James Oberg
 Kenneth Ogden
 Jane L'Loughlin
 Gary Olson
 Jack Owens
 Joni Padgett
 Robert Parker
 Jackson Partin
 Barbara Patterson
 Bert Pearlman
 Terry Pearson
 John Perry
 Carole Pierce
 Marie Plakos
 Richard Quaglino
 Tom Rabone
 Mary Ann Rapuano
 Richard Renheim
 Jerry Richardson
 Patrick Rooney
 Thomas Ross
 Julia Rothrock
 Ray Rudkin
 Vicie Rush
 June Sale
 Glenna Scheer
 Neil Schmidt
 Jodi Servatius
 Norman Seward
 Don Shalvey
 Keith Shattuck
 Frank Shultz
 Ken Sirotkik
 Rodney Skager
 James Smith
 Darryl Stucker
 Lloyd Swanson
 Bonnie Thiele

Private Consultant
 San Gabriel School Dist.
 Anaheim Union H.S. Dist.
 Kings River USD
 Irvine USD
 UCLA
 Kings River USD
 San Diego County
 Norwalk-LaMirada USD
 So. Pasadena USD
 Fillmore USD
 Escondido Union School Dist.
 UCLA
 San Juan USD
 Alum Road School Dist.(?)
 San Marino USD
 Culver City USD
 Vista USD
 Milpitas USD
 Fillmore
 Bear Valley USD
 Ventura USD
 Goleta Union
 Santa Barbara County
 Santa Monica/Malibu USD
 Laguna Salada Union
 Charter Oak USD
 Norwalk-LaMirada USD
 ABC USD
 Fontana Unified
 Manhattan Beach USD
 Tulare USD
 Fontana Unified
 Ventura USD
 West Covina USD
 Glenn County
 Sacramento City Schools
 Tulare City School Dist.
 UCLA
 L.A. Community College Dist.
 Fillmore USD
 Santa Clara County
 Laguna Salada Union
 Merced City Schools
 Norwalk-LaMirada USD
 Goleta Union
 UCLA
 UCLA
 San Ramon Valley USD
 Anaheim Union H.S. Dist.
 Monterey Peninsula USD
 Tulare City School Dist.

Attendees - 6/7/84 Conference

Carol Thomas
 Lories Tolbert
 Rudie Tretten
 Gene Tucker
 Helen Turner
 Marsha Viger
 Dean Waldfogel
 Irwin Wapner
 J.C. Warneke
 Steven Waterman
 Chuck Weis
 Debra Weiss
 Jeff Wells
 Robert Wenkert
 Gary Wexler
 Gail Wickstrom
 Dick Williams
 Marlus Williams
 Robert Williams
 Jim Wilson
 Tom Wilson
 John Wise
 Pat Wolfe
 Mrs. Freddie Wynberg
 Paul Zimmerman
 Ellen Zimmet

UCLA
 Orange County
 Laguna Salada Union
 ABC USD
 UCLA
 Vista USD
 Irvine USD
 Lompoc USD
 Bakersfield City School Dist.
 Berkeley USD
 Fillmore
 UCLA
 Orange County Dept. of Education
 UCLA
 Wm. S. Hart Union H.S. Dist.
 Torrance USD
 UCLA
 Vista USD
 Rialto USD
 Tulare City School Dist.
 UC Irvine
 Elsinore Union H.S. Dist.
 Napa County
 Vallejo City USD
 UCLA
 L.A. City Schools

Appendix A

9:00 - 9:30	REGISTRATION/COFFEE
9:30 - 9:45	INTRODUCTION Dr. Paul E. Heckman, Assistant Director, Laboratory in School and Community Education, University of California, Los Angeles
9:45 - 10:30	Dr. John I. Goodlad, Professor and Co-Director of the Laboratory in School and Community Education, University of California, Los Angeles BEYOND OUTCOME MEASURES: AN AGENDA FOR SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT
10:30 - 11:15	SMALL GROUP DISCUSSIONS
11:15 - 12:00	Dr. Eva Baker, Professor and Director of the Center for the Study of Evaluation, University of California, Los Angeles ASSESSING LOCAL EDUCATIONAL QUALITY: A COMPREHENSIVE SYSTEM
12:00 - 1:00	LUNCH

1:00 - 1:45 Dr. Norman Frederiksen, Educational Testing Service,
Princeton, New Jersey

INFLUENCES ON TESTING AND LEARNING

1:45 - 2:30 SMALL GROUP DISCUSSIONS

2:30 - 2:45 BREAK

2:45 - 3:30 Dr. Elliot Eisner, Professor, Stanford University
USING EDUCATIONAL EVALUATION FOR THE IMPROVEMENT OF
CALIFORNIA'S SCHOOLS

3:30 - 4:15 PANEL DISCUSSION
Dr. Eva Baker
Dr. Elliot Eisner
Dr. Norman Frederiksen
Dr. John I. Goodlad

4:15 - 5:00 RECEPTION